

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SCCT-01 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 DODE-00 SY-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 OPR-01 A-01 PRS-01

NEAE-00 SSO-00 /041 W

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O 191450Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4393

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 6370

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF AMBASSADOR'S CHAUFFEUR

REFS: A. BEIRUT 6299; B. BEIRUT 6303

1. PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO BRING DEPT UP-TO-DATE RE DEVELOPMENTS IN CASE REPORTED REFTELS AND ACTIONS WHICH EMBASSY HAS TAKEN UNTIL NOW. FOLLOWING, FOR THE RECORD, IS CHRONOLOGY OF SALIENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WE CAN CONFIRM AT PRESENT:

SATURDAY, MAY 17 (LOCAL TIMES):

0100 - MRS. MOGRABI (WIFE OF CHAUFFEUR ZOHER MOGRABI) WAS CALLED AT HOME BY PERSONS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS "POLICE" WHO QUESTIONED HER AT LENGTH ABOUT WHEREABOUTS HER HUSBAND, WHETHER HE DRIVING POV OR AMB'S CAR, ETC.

0430 - MRS. MOGRABI AGAIN TELEPHONED BY "POLICE" WHO INFORMED HER "WE HAVE YOUR HUSBAND."

0810 - AMB TELEPHONED BY PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER BOUTROS DEEB (REFTEL A).

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1010 - AMB PHONED DEEB AND INQUIRED WITH WHOM IN GOL EMBASSY SHOULD COORDINATE ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE CHAUFFEUR'S RELEASE. DEEB SAID FONMIN TAQLA SHOULD BE OUR PRIMARY CONTACT.

1100 - AMB SPOKE WITH FONMIN TAQLA BY PHONE TO INFORM LATTER THAT AMB PREPARING FIRST-PERSON DIPL NOTE RE ZOHER'S DISAPPEARANCE AND WISHED TO DELIVER IT PERSONALLY TO TAQLA. TAQLA STRONGLY DISCOURAGED AMB FROM BRINGING NOTE.

1150 - EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER (POL OFFICER) DELIVERED NOTE TO MFA AND WATCHED IT HAND-CARRIED INTO TAQLA'S OFFICE.

1300 - ZOHER TURNED UP AT EMBASSY (REFTEL B). AFTER GIVING BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS DETENTION TO AMB AND EMBOFFS, HE WAS EXAMINED BY EMBASSY DOCTOR AND SCHEDULED FOR FULL DEBRIEFING WITH SECURITY OFFICER ON MONDAY MORNING, MAY 19. AMB MADE EFFORT TO INFORM BOTH DEEB AND TAQLA OF CHAUFFEUR'S RETURN BUT WAS UNABLE TO REACH EITHER. HE SUCCEEDED IN CONTACTING KHALIL HADDAD (DIR OF INTERNATIONAL ORG AFFAIRS, MFA) AT APPROX 1325 AND INFORMED HADDAD THAT EMBASSY PREPARED MAKE ZOHER AVAILABLE TO GOL AUTHORITIES AT ANY TIME FOR INTERROGATION REGARDING INCIDENT. HADDAD PROMISED PASS MESSAGE TO TAQLA AND CONTACT AMB.

1445 - HAVING STILL RECEIVED NO RPT NO PHONE CALL FROM TAQLA, AMB DEPARTED EMBASSY AND INSTRUCTED ZOHER RETURN HOME AND REST. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE, HE AUTHORIZED SECURITY OFFICER TO ISSUE ZOHER WITH PISTOL TO REPLACE THAT TAKEN BY HIS SA'IQA CAPTORS.

1715 - HADDAD OF MFA REACHED AMB BY PHONE WITH "URGENT" MESSAGE FROM TAQLA. HADDAD SAID HE HAD FINALLY CONTACTED TAQLA AT 1650 AND THAT FONMIN WANTED ZOHER'S INTERROGATION TO BE HANDLED BY OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SECURITY (COL. ANTOINE DAHDAH) RATHER THAN BY ORDINARY POLICE. HE GAVE NO INFO RE TIMING OF SUCH INTERROGATION, HOWEVER.

1800 (APPROX) - EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER WAS CALLED BY MSG TO REPORT THAT ZOHER'S SON HAD APPEARED AT EMBASSY TO REPORT HIS FATHER WAS BEING HELD SINCE MID-AFTERNOON AT LOCAL POLICE STATION (BLISS STREET). DO CALLED SECURITY OFFICER WHO INITIATED INQUIRIES THROUGH BEIRUT POLICE CONTACTS. DO THEN INFORMED BOTH AMB AND  
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DCM OF ZOHER'S DETENTION.

1915 - AMB CALLED HADDAD TO REPORT ABOVE DEVELOPMENT, TO PROTEST APPARENT PROTRACTED INHUMANE DETENTION ZOHER, TO ASSURE GOL THAT HE WAS WILLING ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ZOHER'S AVAILABILITY TO GOL AUTHORITIES FOR FURTHER QUESTIONING AS NECESSARY AND TO DEMAND ZOHER'S RELEASE SO HE COULD SPEND NIGHT AT HOME. DCM PHONED DEEB ALONG SAME LINES.

1945 - DO VISITED BLISS STREET POLICE STATION, SAW ZOHER WHO DID NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MISTREATED BUT WAS IN RATHER SCRUFFY HOLDING-CELL, AND TALKED WITH MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY WHO PRESENT AT STATION. DO THEN TALKED WITH FAWZI DAGHER, JUGE D'INSTRUCTION FOR BEIRUT WHO SAID HE HAD SPENT HALF HOUR WITH EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER EXPLAINING "DISCREPANCIES" IN STORIES OF ZOHER AND OTHER PERSONS WHO WITNESSED HIS ABDUCTION. SOMEWHAT LATER, DEEB CALLED DCM TO REPORT THAT GOL AUTHORITIES HAD DISCOVERED ENOUGH SUCH "DISCREPANCIES" AS TO MAKE THEM CONCERNED FOR AMB'S SECURITY. DEEB SAID THAT SINCE GOL RESPONSIBLE FOR AMB'S SAFETY, SECURITY AUTHORITIES WOULD HOLD ZOHER FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION. DEEB ALSO SAID THAT JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES (DAGHER) NOW INVOLVED AND THAT, IF EMBASSY INSISTED ON ZOHER'S RELEASE, MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN UP WITH "HIGHEST AUTHORITY".

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 1975

0900 - DO AND SY OFFICER MET AT BLISS STREET STATION WITH CAPT FATHI HASSAN (BEIRUT POLICE) AND WERE LATER JOINED BY FAWZI DAGHER. IN PRESENCE EMBOFFS, DEPOSITIONS WERE TAKEN IN ARABIC FROM ZOHER, FROM "OMAR GHALAYINI (OWNER OF SNACK BAR FROM WHICH CHAUFFEUR WAS ALLEGEDLY ABDUCTED) AND FROM TEWFIQ SAMHOURI (WHO WAS AT RESTAURANT AT TIME AND-- LIKE GHALAYINI-- REPORTEDLY ACCOMPANIED CHAUFFEUR TO SABRA CAMP). DEPOSITION FROM A WOMAN WHO WAS ALSO INVOLVED, FAWZIYA KHODR, HAD BEEN TAKEN PREVIOUS DAY AND SHE DID NOT RPT NOT APPEAR AT POLICE STATION. SEVERAL DISCREPANCIES DID APPEAR IN THEIR VARIOUS ACCOUNTS AND, DESPITE EFFORTS BY CAPT HASSAN TO BREAK STORIES OF ALL WITNESSES, ALL THREE STUCK BY THEIR ACCOUNTS. MOST PROMINENT DISCREPANCY WAS RE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH ZOHER LEFT SNACK BAR, WITH GHALAYINI AND SAMHOURI REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY HAD SEEN ARMED MEN IN VICINITY AND SUGGESTING THAT ZOHER MADE TRIP TO SABRA

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CAMP "VOLUNTARILY".

1130 - HADDAD PHONED AMB FOR STATUS REPORT. AMB INDICATED EMBASSY STILL WISHED ZOHER RELEASED BUT THAT, IN VIEW OF GOL POSITION THAT EMBASSY SECURITY INVOLVED, WE HAD NOT RPT NOT INSISTED ON HIS RELEASE LAST NIGHT. AMB STATED THAT EMBASSY HAD GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ZOHER HAD BEEN ABDUCTED BY SA'IQA FOR SPECIFIC INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES.

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O 191450Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4394

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1300 (APPROX) - DAGHER ASKED EMBOFFS AT CONCLUSION OF PROCEEDINGS WHAT EMBASSY WISHES WERE IN MATTER. DO REPLIED HE AUTHORIZED BY AMB TO STATE THAT EMBASSY WISHED ZOHER RELEASED FROM JAIL AND THAT EMBASSY WOULD GUARANTEE HIS AVAILABILITY FOR FURTHER QUESTIONING BY GOL. DO FURTHER STATED THAT EMBASSY WOULD NOT, PENDING RESOLUTION OF CASE, ISSUE ZOHER ANOTHER WEAPON. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING DIFFERENCES IN TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES, DO SAID HE WANTED MAKE CLEAR EMBASSY'S INTEREST IN DISCOVERING FACTS OF SITUATION, BUT THAT EMBASSY DID NOT RPT NOT AT THAT POINT ACCEPT AS PROVEN DAGHER'S SUGGESTION THAT ZOHER HAD MADE FALSE STATEMENTS TO POLICE. ZOHER WAS THEN RELEASED AND TAKEN HOME BY FAMILY MEMBERS. BEFORE DEPARTING POLICE STATION, DO EMPHASIZED THAT HE SHOULD PROCEED DIRECTLY TO HIS HOME AND REMAIN THERE UNTIL HE REPORTED TO EMBASSY AT 0800 ON MONDAY, MAY 19, WHEN HE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY PROCEED TO EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICE FOR THOROUGH DEBRIEFING. DO ALSO TOLD ZOHER THAT HE WAS NOT RPT NOT TO CARRY ANY PERSONAL WEAPON UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

2. CASE WAS PICKED UP BY LOCAL PRESS SUNDAY, MAY 18, APPARENTLY ON BASIS OF POLICE REPORTS. MOST PAPERS CARRIED RESUME OF ZOHER'S STATEMENT TO POLICE, INCLUDING ACCUSATION OF SA'IQA CULPABILITY, AND NOTED POLICE HAD FOUND DISCREPANCIES IN ACCOUNTS OF WITNESSES WHO WERE NAMED. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS CONFIRMING ZOHER'S

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ABDUCTION AND SAFE RETURN WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT. ON ARABIC

DAILY, AL ANWAR, CONTINUED REPORTAGE MAY 19, LARGELY REHASHING YESTERDAY'S COVERAGE AND SAYING GOL INVESTIGATION CONTINUES.

3. IN SUPPLEMENTING EFFORTS THROUGH GOL TO OBTAIN ZOHER'S RELEASE FROM SA'IQA AMB SPOKE MORNING MAY 17 WITH HUSSEIN AS SADR, PERSONAL SECRETARY TO SHIITE IMAM MUSA AS SADR. HUSSEIN, WHEN INFORMED OF CASE, SAID HE WOULD CONTACT HIS "FRIENDS" AND REPORT BACK. AFTER ABOUT HALF HOUR, HUSSEIN PHONED AMB TO SAY ONE OF HIS "FRIENDS" KNEW OF THE CASE AND THAT HE (HUSSEIN) WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN ZOHER WOULD BE RELEASED SOON. WITHIN ONE HOUR, ZOHER TURNED UP AT EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN AT THIS POINT, SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT HUSSEIN SADR'S INTERVENTION WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN EFFECTING ZOHER'S RELEASE. WE INTEND TO FOLLOW UP PERSONALLY WITH HUSSEIN TO SEE IF WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT HIS KNOWLEDGEABLE "FRIEND".

4. AT THIS POINT, SY IS TAKING FULL STATEMENT FROM ZOHER (FIRST ONE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN). WE HOPE THAT THIS STATEMENT WILL CLEAR UP CERTAIN VAGUE POINTS IN MAY 17 EVENTS AND PERMIT US TO EVALUATE ROLES AND MOTIVATIONS OF OTHER PRINCIPALS, INCLUDING GHALAYINI AND SAMHOURI. IN PRESENT CHAOTIC ATMOSPHERE IN BEIRUT, IT POSSIBLE THEY HAVE DOCTORED THEIR STORIES AS RESULT OF FEDAYEEN INTIMIDATION OR HAVING BEEN SIMPLY PAID OFF. GOL CLEARLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE MATTER GO AWAY BUT REALIZES, BECAUSE OF EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT, THAT IT MUST CARRY ITS INVESTIGATION THROUGH. ZOHER CLAIMS GOL AUTHORITIES APPEAR INTENT ON MAKING HIM ADMIT THAT ENTIRE EPISODE IS FABRICATION, BUT POLICE INTERROGATORS (PERHAPS BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF ARABIC-SPEAKING EMBOFF) WERE NO TOUGHER MAY 18 ON ZOHER THAN THEY WERE ON OTHER TWO WITNESSES. NEVERTHELESS, THERE LITTLE DOUBT THAT GOL WOULD RATHER NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE EXISTENCE OF SA'IQA OPERATION AGAINST EMBASSY AND/OR ITS STAFF, SINCE THIS WOULD PLACE IT IN EMBARRASSING POSITION OF POTENTIALLY OFFENDING EITHER POWERFUL FEDAYEEN INTEREST OR USG.

5. POLYGRAPH OPERATOR ARRIVED BEIRUT THIS MORNING FROM ATHENS. HE WILL INTERROGATE ZOHER BEGINNING TOMORROW MORNING IN EFFORT CLARIFY SOME OF THE APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS RE ZOHER'S APPREHENSION BY SA'IQA.

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## Message Attributes

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